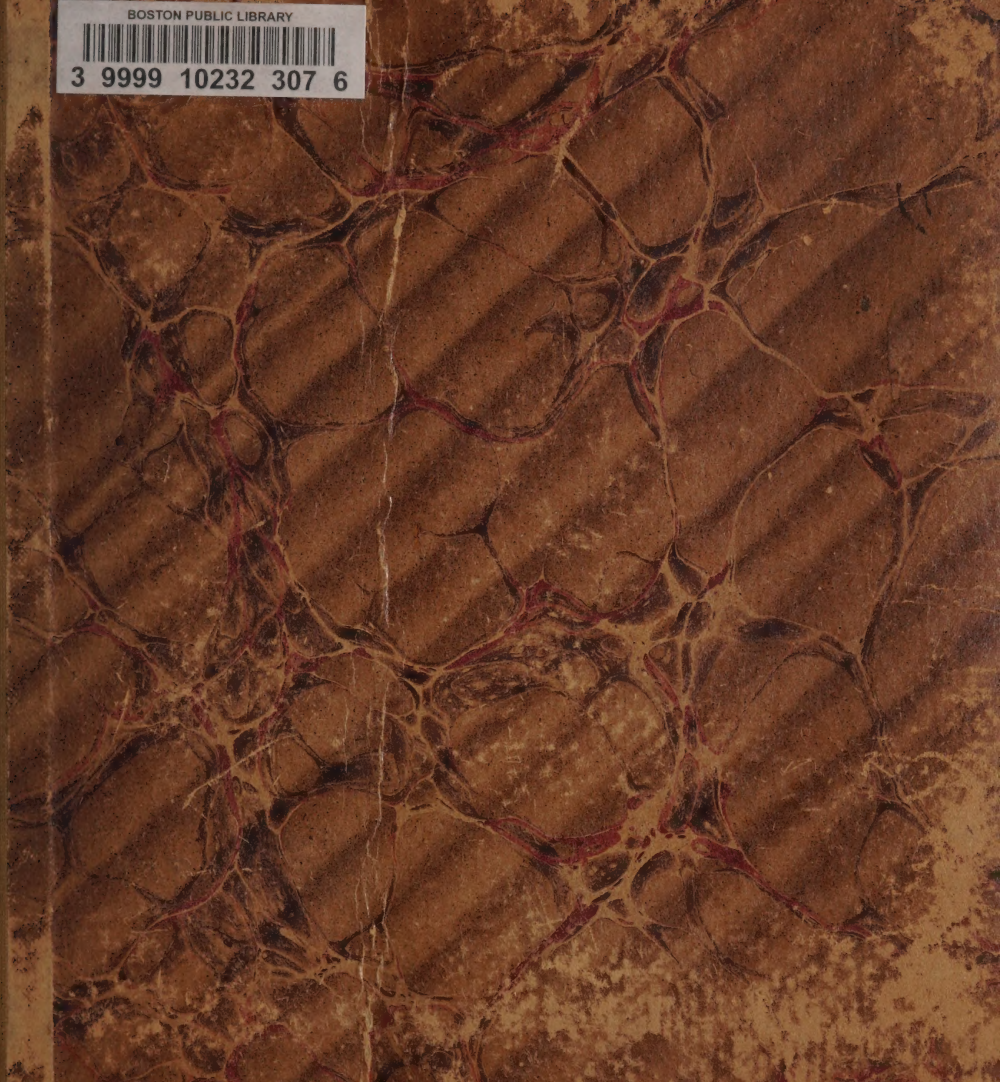


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# A Short History of South Boston

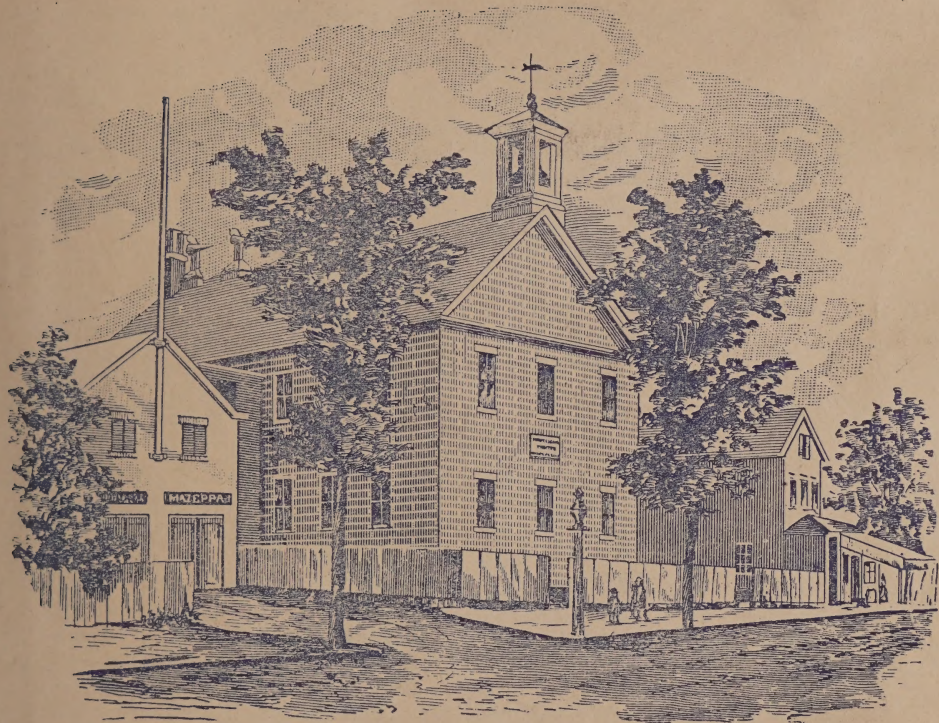
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City Point Branch Library



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*Courtesy of The BOSTON DAILY AMERICAN*

Old Hawes schoolhouse, Broadway, South Boston, built in 1823 and still being used. Now a part of the Bigelow school district. The school is located on Broadway near Dorchester Street.

*L. H. Belden  
May 27 1931*



## A Short History of South Boston



THE early history of South Boston is closely interwoven with the history of Dorchester. Dorchester was settled in 1630 and the section now called South Boston was called Dorchester Neck. The band of Dorchester colonists was carefully selected by Rev. John White of Dorchester, England, and sent over here in the ship "Mary and John." It is generally believed that they landed on the south shore of South Boston, between I and K Streets. Once ashore, they began to look around for suitable location to build their homes. Close to the landing was too marshy for dwelling purposes, so they agreed to build on Rock Hill (now Savin Hill). They decided to use Dorchester Neck (now South Boston) solely for pasturage. In 1633, it was ordered that all persons putting cattle in the Neck should pay two shillings a head to cover expenses of erecting fences to keep the cattle from straying away. Until 1637 all the inhabitants of Dorchester were allowed to graze their cattle at Dorchester Neck, but in that year, several of the settlers secured exclusive privileges to use the pasture.

In 1775, Dorchester Neck had but nine dwelling houses in which were twelve families.

In February, 1776, the British troops landed on the Neck and destroyed every house they saw. Then began the Siege of Boston. Washington and his army secretly fortified Dorchester Heights which commanded the entire harbor and was a menace to the British troops in Boston. Finally, on March 17th, the British evacuated Boston and the name of South Boston was written in the pages of history.

Another historical place in connection with South Boston is Castle Island. This is the oldest fortified place that has been in continuous use in the United States. Soon after Boston was settled, this island was fortified and in 1703 a new and stronger fortification was erected and was called Castle William, after King William. This fortification remained in excellent condition until the Evacuation of Boston in 1776, when it was badly damaged by fire. In 1798, Castle Island, the fort, twenty buildings, ordinance and stores, were ceded to the United States. Until the state prison in Charlestown was erected in 1805, persons sentenced to hard labor were kept on the Island. In 1803, a new and more substantial fortification was completed and was named Fort Independence. In 1833, the present fort was

built and formed one of Boston's main defenses during the Civil War. It was also used in the Spanish American War. At present Castle Island is connected with South Boston by a road and is open to the public as a part of Boston's park system.

In 1804, a bill was signed annexing Dorchester Neck to the town of Boston. Although separated from Boston by a channel only a few hundred yards wide, there was no communication between the two peninsulas except by means of occasional row-boats, which could sail only at high tide. But, as there were only ten families residing on the Neck, these were all sufficient for the purpose. At the time of annexation, South Boston comprised about 560 acres of land. The number of inhabitants was about 60, and of poll taxpayers there were 19. The name was then changed to South Boston, and comprised everything east of what is now Dorchester and Ninth Streets. In 1825, there were 1,986 inhabitants and in 1830, the popu-

lation had increased to 2,865 and since that time the growth has been rapid and steady.

With the opening of two bridges connecting the peninsula with the mainland, many new residents flocked to South Boston. The present plan of streets was laid out, making Broadway an eighty-foot thoroughfare running through the centre of the district. Meeting houses, churches and schools were opened.

In 1872, the South Boston Branch Library was opened and in 1901, the Andrew Square Branch was opened in the John A. Andrew School. In July, 1906, our own City Point Branch was opened in a store on Broadway near I Street. In 1912 the Branch moved to its present attractive quarters in the new municipal building and now in 1930 is serving a thickly populated community having thirteen schools and seven churches.

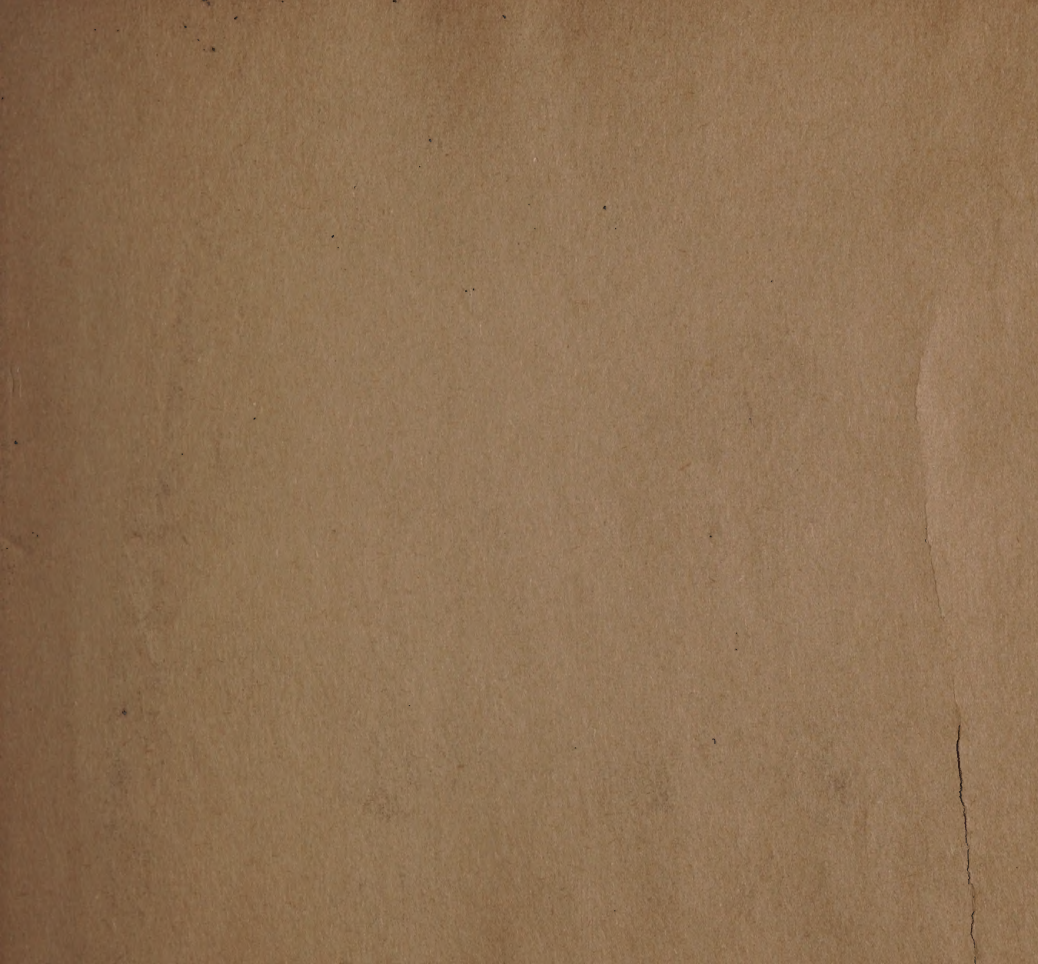
The following books in connection with the history of South Boston may be obtained at the City Point Branch Library:

EVACUATION DAY	Ellis
HISTORY OF THE SIEGE OF BOSTON	Richard Frothingham
ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF SOUTH BOSTON	Gillespie
BOSTON	De Wolfe Howe
GOOD OLD DORCHESTER	Orcutt
DESCRIPTION OF DORCHESTER	Shurtleff
HISTORY OF SOUTH BOSTON	Toomey & Rankin

WINSOR'S MEMORIAL HISTORY OF BOSTON









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